

Proceedings of
the XXIst International Congress
on Ancient Bronzes

edited by Dávid Bartus, Zsolt Mráv and Melinda Szabó

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Budapest, 20–24 September 2022

Edited by
Dávid BARTUS – Zsolt MRÁV – Melinda SZABÓ

Budapest, 2024

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Introduction

by Dávid Bartus, Zsolt Mráv and Melinda Szabó

The *International Congress on Ancient Bronzes* conference series has been around for more than five decades. The first conference, held in 1970 in Nijmegen, was followed by others every 2-3 years. The seventh iteration of the series in 1982 was the first one with close ties to Hungary, as it was hosted by the Szent István Király Museum in Székesfehérvár. The idea to hold the conference in Budapest first arose in 2017. Originally, the event was scheduled for 2020, but it was postponed first to 2021 and then to 2022 due to the pandemic. Finally, it became realized in September of 2022 as an event co-hosted by the Faculty of Humanities of the Eötvös Loránd University and the Hungarian National Museum. More than 120 participants registered from 22 countries, including archaeologists, art historians, conservators and natural science experts from renowned museums, research institutes, and universities. The conference was a hybrid event, about half of the participants attended personally, the rest joined in online. The conference comprised 50 presentations in 11 sessions in English, German, and Spanish.

Although the series has ‘ancient’ in its name, it does not focus only on bronze objects from the Antiquity but every archaeological period from prehistory up to early modern times (though most presentations discuss finds from the Greek and Roman cultural sphere). The topics include large statues and statuettes, bronze vessels, pieces of attire and instruments, statistics in archaeology and the analysis of material and technological characteristics. Following tradition, the conference started with the Large Bronze statues session: in the opening lecture, Gunvor Lindström presented a new research project into Hellenistic and Parthian statues from Iran. Next, Colleen Snyder and Seth Pevnick presented a new 3D model and various technological observations made on a near life-sized statue of the “Cleveland Apollo”. Andreas Vordos and Georgianna Moraitou reported on the results of iconographical and material analyses conducted on a fragment of a colossal statue from Aigio.

Topics related to Italy, including votive bronze statues from the Diana sanctuary in Nemi (by Federica Grossi), bronze objects from the Mantua region (by Margherita Bolla) and Late Roman bronze workshops in the Marche region were featured in the Rome and Italy session. Despite being in Italy, Pompeii and Herculaneum were granted their own session, where Kenneth Lapatin and Erik Risser presented new hypotheses about the satyr statue from the Villa dei Papiri. Valeria Meirano presented the impact that the 1943 bombing of the Museo Pompeiano had on its bronze statues. A series of presentations focused on a DFG project, titled “New Light from Pompeii,” by Ruth Bielfeldt; the lectures by Ute Klatt, Alessandra Giumlia-Mair, Ruth Bielfeldt, Susanne Bosche and Johannes Eber all discussed bronze candelabra and other lighting equipment from the 1st century AD.

Ancient Greece also had a session of its own. Sophie Descamps, Benoît Mille and Pascale Richardin gave presentations discussing the Apollo sanctuary in Didyma. Stephanie Stoss presented a Late Hellenistic candelabrum depicting a centaur, and András Patay-Horváth proposed an entirely new reconstruction of the Serpentine Column in Delphi.

Nadin Burkhardt and Aura Piccioni organized a session with six presentations on the large bronze statue record of the Roman provinces. The reports following the two introductory lectures by Nadin Burkhardt and Norbert Franken presented bronze statue fragments from Germania (Claudia Sarge

and Ulrike Wolf), Lusitania (Trinidad Nogales), Hispania (David Ojeda) and Raetia (Aura Piccioni and Roland Schwab). Three lectures focused on Pannonia: László Borhy presented a new piece of an ornamental horse armour discovered at Brigetio, now in the collection of the Hungarian National Museum, while Csilla Sáró surveyed enamelled brooches from the territory of Komárom-Esztergom County in Hungary. Finally, Zsolt Mráv gave a summary of figural bronze ornaments recovered from wagon burials in Pannonia.

The session on bronze vessels has always been among the most important ones at our conferences. Accordingly, the topics covered a great variety of subjects including Campanian vessels from the 1st century AD (Klara De Decker), Sarmatian burials (Mikhail Treister), and vessels from the Hun (Orsolya Heinrich-Tamáska and Stephen W. Merkel) and Migration Periods (Tivadar Vida and Stefan Lehmann). The session was completed by presentations from Silvia Mustată and Sorin Cociş on an assemblage from Cluj-Napoca, and by Miroslav Vujović on bronze vessels from Serbia.

The session on small bronze statues included presentations on artefacts related to oriental cults in the territory of Albania, finds from Wareswald (Philip Kiernan), and a bust of Alexander from Oarda-Bulza (Mariana Egri, Matthew McCarty, and Aurel Rustoiu). Péter F. Kovács outlined a connection network based on bronze objects between the Middle Tisza Region and the Northern Balkans in the Late Iron Age. Fabienne Karl demonstrated how a new software may be used in analysing the production of bronze casting moulds.

The final day of the conference started with the session *Do ut des*, organized by Arianna Zapelloni Pavia, discussing questions related to votive bronze artefacts. Five presentations addressed different aspects of votive bronze objects from Olympia to Pre-Roman Italy (Cristina Biella, Arianna Zapelloni Pavia, Raimon Graells i Fabregat, Vana Orfanou and Azzurra Scarci).

The last two decades saw a significant increase in the number of lectures focused on statistics in archaeology, as well as on technological and material analysis. Accordingly, the last session of the Budapest conference, on archaeometry, was the largest. Francesco Cantini and Francesco Grazzi held two presentations on behalf of their sizable team on the application of non-invasive neutron-based techniques, focusing on imaging and the neutron diffraction method. Anna Patera and her colleagues demonstrated the results of a recent conservation project of a statue, the Winged Victory of Brescia. Rosemary Jeffreys held a technical presentation on the manufacturing method of Hellenistic wires. Uwe Peltz discussed how the teeth of ancient large-sized statues were produced. The chronological endpoint of the conference was marked by a lecture by Omid Oudbashi and his colleagues on the material analysis of Early Modern Armenian church bells. The conference concluded with two presentations on iconography: Thomas M. Weber-Karyotakis surveyed the iconography of Apollo, while Ádám Szabó presented a Mithric plate discovered in Brigetio.

In addition to the presentations, four posters were displayed during the congress. One focused on bronzeworking in the Roman Period Gerasa (Stefanie Becht). Another addressed the results of the material analysis of the patina of the Winged Victory statue from Brescia (Francesco Cantini, Francesco Grazzi et al.). The third poster presented the new Bronze Age artefacts in the collection of the Musée National de Préhistoire (Pauline Rolland). The fourth examined 1st-century AD military equipment from the Crimea (Mikhail Treister and Nikolay Vinokurov).

The Hungarian National Museum welcomed the congress by organising two thematic chamber exhibitions. A Roman bronze statuette, donated to the museum in 2020, from the area of a Roman villa near Pomáz was selected as the *Artefact of the Month*. The almost complete statuette depicts a domestic Lar, a deity protecting the family inhabiting the villa at Pomáz. The other temporary exhibition, titled *Images cast in bronze. Roman figural bronze artefacts in the collection of the Hungarian National Museum* displayed 27 bronze items and statues of high artistic value from the museum's

archaeological collection. The exhibition included a thematic cabinet on the aesthetics of utilitarian bronze items, showcasing bronze vessels used for storage and serving, toilet requisites, bronze lamps that lit banquets and sleeping quarters, as well as lavishly embellished bronze accessories for wagons. One must highlight the embossed bronze plates that adorned wooden boxes, featuring figural motifs depicting characters of Greek mythology or biblical scenes, including apostles. Free-standing sculptures constitute the highest-ranked genre of Roman bronzeworking; the figurines comprise both miniaturised reproductions of popular and well-known Hellenistic and Roman stone sculptures and larger-than-life-sized reproductions of gods and emperors. The two main exhibits were also free-standing sculptures: a torso fragment of a gilded bronze statue depicting a centaur from Sarmizegetusa in Dacia and a Bacchus bust from Brigetio.

The concluding event of the conference was an excursion to Komárom. Participants visited the excavation led by the Department of Classical and Roman Provincial Archaeology of ELTE in the military camp of Brigetio, a collection of gypsum copies in the Star Fort and the permanent exhibit of the Klapka György Museum in Komárom. An abundance of positive feedback has reflected the success of the 21st International Congress on Ancient Bronzes in Budapest, an event of key importance in improving the recognition and connections of Hungarian archaeology and ancient art history.